

# **SELF-MOTIVATION IN THE WORKPLACE**

*PARTICIPANT'S MANUAL*

*Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)*

*State of Louisiana*

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## **SELF-MOTIVATION IN THE WORKPLACE**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will help participants examine how to be more motivated in the workplace. Participants will use this course as an opportunity to identify ways to build a sense of meaningfulness into their working environment. Participants will also learn how to anticipate the implications of words and actions within work group settings. They will be able to understand how a motivated employee's work performance positively impacts productivity within the organization.

### **JOB OUTCOMES**

- ☐ Creates and supports a work environment which encourages quality service to the public.
- ☐ Demonstrates a personal commitment to provide quality service to the public.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- ☐ Discover ways to create a work environment that motivates individuals.
- ☐ Assess your needs in order to motivate yourself at work.

## **SELF-MOTIVATION IN THE WORKPLACE**

“You’re hired!” Remember hearing those words for the first time? For some it may have been over a decade ago, and, for others, it may have been a few short weeks ago. Instead of reflecting on how long ago it may have been, think back to the way it made you feel. Thoughts of excitement, anxiety, fear, and/or determination may have been racing around in your head all at the same time.

### **Individual Activity**

*How:* What were some of those specific thoughts/feelings?

Be prepared to share with the class.

Notes:

A first job can be a powerful experience. It represents a chance to showcase talents and skills to others. It's an opportunity to make an impact on others with a first impression. It is exciting!

Throughout a career, this excitement may fade. Bad bosses, lots of gossip, or a misdirected team are just a few of the reasons why it becomes easy for those first time memories of, "You're hired!" to lose significance. For many people, life begins to move in another direction, and a job becomes merely a means to an end or just a place we have to go.

If you find yourself following the path described above, then STOP! It does not have to be that way. YOU can change that direction, and even better news is that you can find happiness in what you do at work.

If you are one of the lucky ones whose career has not taken the turns described above, then you're in luck as well! This course will provide insight on how work can be more meaningful through every day experiences.

### **Key Premise**

Even though we can influence our family members', friends', subordinates', co-workers 'and even our superiors' behavior by our actions and attitudes, ultimately we cannot change other people's attitudes or behavior. Each person determines his or her self-motivation. Therefore, this course is geared strictly toward what you, as an individual, can do to make your work more enjoyable. Learning how to find joy in a job is a *skill* that takes individual practice, and this course will share insights on how to move closer to being personally motivated (or increasing your level of motivation) in your work.

Since the course focus is not on improving others shortcomings, the course will spend limited time on the issues others bring into the workplace that may negatively affect you. Rather, we'll look at ways that you can find personal satisfaction and stay motivated in your job. Today, think about what gets you excited at work and what touches you to do a better job.

## Individual Activity

*What:* Negative Energy Exercise

*How:* Brainstorm all the things in your job that represent negative energy from others.

Include all the issues that are outside your control. In your group, write down all the responses on chart paper, and be prepared to share with the class.

Notes:

## *IF IT IS TO BE...IT'S UP TO ME*

Wouldn't it be great if everyone loved their jobs and felt appreciated for their hard work? In a perfect world, that would be the case. But, as we sit here today, it may or may not be true for your individual circumstance.

One thing, however, rings true for everyone. Work that is more meaningful makes our jobs easier to enjoy and stay motivated. For this reason, we are going to explore ways to make work more meaningful.

Getting excited about a task or a project indicates that you find the activity meaningful. Meaningfulness is about the energy attached to a purpose and the passion you have for a task or project. You may spend extra time thinking of creative ways to plan, new ways to implement and innovative ideas to make it successful. These are sure signs that you enjoy this particular aspect of your job.

### *Meaningful work signs*

- Excitement about a task or project
- Subconsciously thinking about task or project while working on other job tasks

### *Meaningless work signs*

- Procrastination
- No emotional investment
- Feelings of emptiness in job performance
- Easily distracted

Over the course of a career, an individual's passions at work may change, develop and grow in different ways. As a young child, your aspirations were probably much different than they are now.

Changing passions throughout a career is healthy. It demonstrates that you make decisions based upon what brings you joy and energy. There are, however, some people who are not aware of where their energy comes from in their job.

## Individual Activity

*How:* Identify at least 5 tasks, items or aspects of your work that bring you joy and energize you.

Be prepared to discuss with the class.

Notes:

## CREATIVE THINKING

Life is too precious to spend all the working hours in a lifeless state just to pass time until the next day off. Doing so strips us of energy and robs us of sharing ourselves with others.

Many people feel their work environment is causing them to lose enthusiasm at work. Often people feel they have no control over their environment. Indeed, there are many things outside of our control, including: supervisors who don't appreciate hard work, miserable co-workers, underpaid employees who are overworked, etc. There are many more problems than can be listed in this course manual. However, this course is not designed to focus on those negative aspects that are outside of our control. It is designed to help you become more energized and motivated. As such, you are the focus of this course.

Consider the idea that jobs are not intended to negatively affect us. Instead, if handled appropriately, experiences from a job can transform us into stronger, wiser and better people. The challenge is to creatively handle the situations presented so that our office/workplace is enjoyable.

Finding satisfaction in a job does not just happen. Rather, it requires making a conscious effort to seek out different ways to enjoy work. There are clear choices that must be made about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself.



## Individual Activity

*What:* Workplace Assessment

*How:* Using the questionnaire below, describe your current work environment.

1. Provide a physical description of your workplace. For example, what color are the walls? Cubicles?
2. Number of people in workgroup:
3. Primary method of communication within your workplace:
4. What are the physical surroundings of your workspace? (Example: Describe any materials posted on the walls, on bulletin boards, or on the desk area?)
5. Describe the one place in your office that you enjoy the most? Why?

6. Describe the place in your office that you least enjoy? Why?
7. Do you decorate for special events including holidays? If yes, please describe.
8. Consider the results of your workplace assessment; is your workplace **fun**, if not why not? Look for opportunities to change the “fun” aspect of your workplace. Use the suggestions below to begin this process, would any of these bring joy, laughter or greater satisfaction into your workplace? What would?

### WAYS TO CREATE A FUN WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Make a list of all the people and things that bring you joy and pleasure. Refer back to it when you are upset or not motivated.
- Create a top ten list of all the funniest memories from your department. Update them regularly. (Make sure they are appropriate.)
- Bring plants or other personal meaningful items into the workplace (if the setting is appropriate).
- Deliver bad news with an appropriate sense of humor. For example, if a piece of office equipment is broken and needs to get fixed. Send the news to your supervisor in humorous fashion, if appropriate. Or, if you have a continual leak in your ceiling (i.e. four years), refer to it as your “water feature.”

## **MAKE THEIR DAY**

Many argue there is too little time to pay attention to others' needs because of the hectic demands of work. Although it can be easy to let this happen, it is a big mistake to do so.

When you are part of a negative environment, you might feel uncomfortable to be the first person to try to change the climate. Although this is understandable, it is important to realize that when you treat others positively, you are spreading recognition and respect. This is how giving others special attention can energize and revitalize the workplace. In fact, helping out others *can make you feel better* and make them feel better too.

### *Prepare yourself to 'Make their Day'*

- Become aware of people who need positive attention.
- Make it a habit to be respectful toward others.
- Recognize others regularly for their work contributions.

## Individual Activity

*What:* Discover ways to 'Make their day'

*How:* Answer the following questions:

1. Think about a time when someone made your day. What did he/she do? How did it change your day?
2. What do you currently do to put others in a better mood?
3. As a group, brainstorm ways to make others' day where you work.

## **BE THERE**

People often forget to enjoy each day because it is so easy to get overwhelmed with negative or potentially draining situations. Getting sucked into a mundane, joyless routine can happen even to the most positive people. It is critical to discover what it takes to enjoy each day.

Going through the motions of a job without really paying attention only allows us to give part of ourselves to situations we face. Being just physically present sends the wrong message about who you are. It indicates to others that you don't care about the situation, the agency, and, most importantly, about the other people involved. Is this really the message that you want to send to your boss and co-workers?

Another common mistake involves looking toward non-work-related upcoming events to bring happiness. Living for the next weekend or the next vacation robs you of the joy of day to day living. So, to be involved in the day-to-day details of a job sends a powerful message to others including co-workers, supervisors, customers, and stakeholders. It shows that you care about yourself and about others as well.

### **Steps to "Being There"**

1. Give a situation your undivided attention.
2. Focus on the needs of the situation (spoken and unspoken).
3. Throw away a personal agenda.
4. Listen to others perspectives on the situation.

Following these four steps helps to stay connected to what is going on around you. You can find more satisfaction and joy in your surroundings if you invest time and energy into each situation you face.

## **CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE**

This is a simple concept that requires every individual to be responsible for the way he/she reacts to what life places in your path. Choosing an attitude forces us to quit blaming others for unpleasant or stressful situations and take control over the way we respond to situations. Being responsible for your own attitude yields tremendous personal power.

### **Steps to "Choosing Your Attitude"**

1. Identify your current attitude.
2. Make a decision about your current attitude- keep it, re-shape it, and/or toss it.
3. Act on your decision EVERYDAY.

Many people don't realize that attitudes are dictated by thoughts. If you are thinking negatively, then it shapes the way you behave toward others around you.

### **Individual Activity**

*What:* Choose Your Attitude Personal Reflection

*How:* Identify a recent situation that involved someone with a poor attitude and discover whether or not you handled the situation appropriately.

Notes:

## **GRAND FINALE**

The purpose of this course is to teach you how to get more meaning out of your current job, even though the situation may not be perfect. There are very few people who have the 'perfect job'. Often, it is up to us to create a positive situation.

The final aspect of this course incorporates all the concepts learned throughout this session. It provides an opportunity to put them into practice.

### **Individual Activity**

*What:* Grand Finale- Problem Identification

*How:* Describe your current job setting and the challenges you face within your workgroup.

Brainstorm solutions with your group members.

Notes:



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